

Arson is one of the major causes of fire loss for business and property owners. Deliberately lit fires have the potential to cause serious harm to people and property as well as resulting in major disruptions to business operations.

Some types of business and property may be more vulnerable to arson damage because of their occupation or location.

Arson fires are sometimes started by disgruntled staff and to cover up crime such as theft.

Arson attacks usually occur at nights or on weekends outside of normal business hours. Unoccupied or vacant properties are at increased risk of arson attack.

An arson focussed risk assessment can assist a business to understand related hazards and how they can be controlled. The risk assessment should firstly determine the business or property owner's exposure to arson, taking into consideration:

- ▼ Nature of business/occupation – Some types of business/properties may be more vulnerable for example vacant buildings or those targeted by activists.
- ▼ Location of premises – Is the location of the business/premises in a high crime area or bushfire risk area? Have previous vandalism and/or arson incidents occurred in the area?
- ▼ Relationships with staff, customers etc. Have there been any threats made against the business?

Following this a review of the existing level of controls to reduce the risk of arson should be conducted including an assessment of:

- ▼ Perimeter security
- ▼ Adequacy of lighting
- ▼ Building security, doors, windows
- ▼ Electronic security, security alarms, CCTV, access control
- ▼ Security patrols/guards
- ▼ Housekeeping particularly with regard to external storage of combustible materials such as waste, combustible pallets etc.
- ▼ Level of fire protection/detection and access to fire hydrants/control valves.

Finally once a risk assessment has been conducted then control measures can be implemented such as:

- ▼ Keeping waste bins in a secure area clear of the building and removing rubbish from site regularly
- ▼ Ensure timber pallets and other combustible materials are stored well clear of the building
- ▼ Secure external storage of dangerous goods such as flammable liquids
- ▼ Maintain sufficient clearance to trees, and vegetation
- ▼ Ensure perimeter, electronic and physical security measures are adequate and maintained

- ▼ Ensure fire protection/detection systems are maintained and access to system controls are secured.



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